

Employee Survey Highlights 2004

1. The overall response rate was 37% (down 3 percentage points from 2002) for the overall Department. Response rates varied by division—ranging from 27% to 100%.
2. Overall, 81% of staff agree they are satisfied with their jobs, about the same as in 2002. 43% of staff strongly agreed they were satisfied with their jobs—a 2% percentage point increase from the last survey.
3. Overall, 61% agreed they were “as satisfied or more satisfied” with their employment compared to last year—the same as in 2002.
4. The areas where staff were most positive (strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement) included:
 - The mission/purpose of my agency makes me feel my work is important (92%)*
 - The work I do is a good match for my skills and interests (89%)*
 - I know where to get answers to my questions, problems, or concerns (89%)
 - The people I work with cooperate to get the job done (88%)
 - My coworkers are committed to doing quality work (88%)*
 - My supervisor lets me know what is expected of me (87%)*

Four (4) of these questions (starred items) are listed in Gallup's top 12 variables that are highly correlated with organizational ability to keep talented employees.

5. Areas where staff were most likely to disagree (strongly or somewhat) included:
 - Compared to a year ago, I am as satisfied or more satisfied with my employment (39%)
 - When I do good work, I receive frequent recognition or praise (29%)
 - My ideas to improve service operations are listened to and considered for implementation (26%)
 - I have a voice in the decisions made within my work group (20%)
 - Organizational policies are clearly communicated to me (20%)
 - Someone in my work environment influences me to do my best (19%)

6. Female staff are more likely than male staff to say they are satisfied with their jobs overall and that they are more satisfied with their jobs this year than last year. Male staff are more likely to say they have a voice in decisions made within their workgroup, communication within the workgroup is accurate and timely, and that their ideas to improve service operations are listened to and considered for implementation.
7. Management/Supervisory staff are generally more positive than non-management staff on most issues presented in the survey. Non-management staff were more likely to agree that their supervisor meets with them about their progress. There was no real difference between management and non-management staff regarding getting the necessary information to do the job, a person who at work who influences them to do their best, available training, and knowing what is expected of them.
8. Employees who have been with the Department for less than 3 years continue to be more positive about their employment than those who have been here longer. They are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, feel someone influences them to do their best and that someone in the workplace cares for them, talked to a supervisor about their progress, say their ideas are listened to and considered, that communication within the workgroup is good, that coworkers are committed to doing a good job, and say they receive praise.
9. Employees located in the state office were more likely than those in the regional offices to say they were satisfied with their jobs and more likely than those in regional offices and institutions to say they are more satisfied than last year.

Employees in the state office were most likely to agree that their ideas are listened to and their work is a good match for their skills and interests. Those working in institutions were least likely to say coworkers are committed to doing good work and the mission of the agency makes them feel important.

These findings are similar to previous years. However, in 2002, the state office stood out as more positive on a greater number of items.

10. As in 2002, the greatest predictor of job satisfaction is whether an employee feels his/her ideas to improve service operations are listened to and considered for implementation. Additional predictors of job satisfaction are whether the employee feels their job is a good match for their skills and whether they receive the necessary information to do their job.

The greatest predictor of continuing satisfaction is whether an employee receives praise for good work, followed by whether employees feel their ideas are listened to.

11. Unfortunately, the survey item "My ideas to improve service operations are listened to..." received one of the lowest scores among employees. So, the greatest predictor of employee satisfaction and whether they are more satisfied than the year before currently has one of the lowest levels of agreement.

In addition, receiving praise for good work is a strong predictor for continued job satisfaction and this also had lower ratings from staff.

While higher scores on these elements may indicate greater job satisfaction, lower scores on these elements tend to indicate lower job satisfaction. Therefore, as long as these elements receive low ratings, job satisfaction may not improve to a sufficiently positive level. Addressing these issues may lead to improved job satisfaction for Department employees.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2004

Summary of Written Comments

19. Compared to a year ago, I am as satisfied or more satisfied with my employment. Why?

The three most frequent responses for those who agreed they were **as satisfied or more satisfied** were:

- That there was a good match between the employee's position and their education and skills and that they believe their expertise is valued and utilized. Many mentioned that they had either moved to a new position where there was a better "fit" in the past year or that they had been promoted into a position that utilized their skills.
- That employees enjoyed the nature of the work they do in human services and get satisfaction from the positive difference they make in the lives of those we serve.
- That the support and sense of "team" that employees have with their co-workers, and often with their supervisors and managers, raises their satisfaction level.

The three most frequent responses for those who reported they were **less satisfied than last year** were:

- Overall compensation - employees do not feel they or their co-workers are paid commensurate with the level of work and dedication that is expected of them. Employees expressed extreme frustration at the lack of raises over the past 3 years and the small raise that was granted this year. Of particular concern to employees is that the 1% raise will be more than off-set by the increase in cost of benefits such as health insurance. For those divisions and offices that were impacted by market adjustments this year, there were many comments that the compression created by how the Legislature funded and DHRM implemented them has had a very negative impact on the satisfaction level of employees who have stayed with the state for several years. New employees are on the same pay step as those who have been with us for 3 to 5 or even more years.
- That there was not a good match between the employees education and skills and the job they have. Employees also mentioned that they saw no room for advancement in their particular agency or area of work assignment.
- That the lack of support or sense of caring they felt from their supervisor, administration, and/or department decreased their satisfaction level.

20. What three things would you like to see continued in your division/agency?

Many of the comments were specific to programs or people within an employee's specific office. Those areas where there was consistency across the department in responses included:

- The trainings and mentoring opportunities that are provided to employees.
- The sense of teamwork and positive attitude amongst co-workers.
- The specific model of practice and service delivery being implemented - e.g. Practice Model in DCFS, Self-Directed Services in DSPD and Balanced and Restorative Justice in DJJS.
- Increased communication between and amongst employees and their administration

21. What three things would you recommend starting in your division/agency?

There was a great deal of consistency across the department in responses to this question. The most mentioned items were:

- Regular [annual] cost of living and merit raises
- Re-establishment of an incentive or bonus system to reward staff for exceptional performance
- Additional employee training and education opportunities

22. What three things would you recommend stopping in your division/agency?

Many of the comments were specific to programs or people within an employee's specific office. Those areas where there was consistency across the department in responses included:

- Stop "freezing" employee wages and stop decreasing benefits
- Stop duplicative and/or unnecessary paperwork requirements and unrealistic caseloads or workload levels
- Stop allowing employees who do not perform to continue to get by while the rest of the employees work so hard. Specific comments included concern regarding employees and supervisors who do not put in a full 40 hour work week, poor performers being moved or even promoted instead of receiving appropriate disciplinary action, and good performers having to pick up the slack for their co-workers who do not perform.